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Mr. *BEDFORD*'s
SERMONS
AT THE
Two Assizes
HELD AT
Bury St. Edmund's, 1698.

TWO SERMONS

Preach'd at

St. *Maries* in *Bury St. Edmunds*,

AT THE

ASSIZES.

The First,

Upon the Seventh of *April* 1698, before the Honourable Sir *Thomas Rokeby* Kt. one of the Justices of His Majesty's Court of Kings-Bench.

The Second,

Upon the 16th of *August* 1698, before the Right Honourable Sir *Edward Ward* Kt. Lord Chief Baron of His Majesty's Court of Exchequer.

By *William Bedford*, Master of Arts, Rector of *Whitton*, and Vicar of *Stradbrooke* and *Wingfield*.

LONDON,

Printed for S. Manship at the *Ship* in *Cornhill*, 1698.

To the Right Worſhipful

John Cornwallis Eſquire,

High-Sheriff,

And one of the

Deputy-Lieutenants

OF THE

County of *SUFFOLK.*

SIR,

WHEN *the Grand-Juries of the County, conſiſting of ſo many Gentlemen of Honourable and Eminent Qualities, Reputation and Eſtates, (with the Approbation of my Lord Chief Baron) were both pleaſed unanimouſly to declare, That their Opinions were, It would be*

uſeful to the Publick that theſe Diſcourſes ſhould be Printed; I thought my ſelf obliged to comply with their Deſires: And the rather, ſeeing I am neither afraid nor aſhamed, to give the moſt publick Teſtimony of my Fidelity to His Majeſty, and Stedfaſtneſs to the true National Intereſts; and hereby I obtain alſo this occaſion of expreſſing my Gratitude for your many Years Favours and Civilities, being,

SIR,

Your moſt obliged

and humble Servant

William Bedford.

Geneſis

Geneſis 18. 25.

That be far from thee to do after this manner, to ſlay the Righteous with the Wicked: And that the Righteous ſhould be as the Wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?

SO juſt and laudable, as well as convenient and uſeful, is this Practice of Juſtice traverſing of our Counties and Provinces; and coming (as it were) home to our Habitations, that one would be apt at the firſt view to conjecture, that this Method had ſome Divine Original from God's own Example. There never was the Invention of any thing publickly beneficial to Mankind, but the Ancients aſcribed it to ſome of their Deities; as Agriculture to *Ceres*, Phyſick to *Æſculapius*, and Muſick to *Apollo*: Well then may we think the like of this Perambulation of Juſtice, the wholſom Phyſick of the Body Politick; the tuning of the whole Kingdom into the Muſical Harmony of Peace and Concord.

I might ſay as St. *Bernard* ſaith (in the like caſe) of the Hierarchy of the Church, *Nec nilem reputes hanc formam, quia in terra eſt, exemplum habet è cælo.*

Neither can I think this Method of adminiſtring Juſtice throughout our Provinces a meer Humane Deviſe, but I perſwade my ſelf that the Legiſlator that firſt ordained it, had ſeen this Pattern of it in the Mount of God, and lo, if you deſire for to ſee it, I have found the Pattern it ſelf in this Chapter. Here is God the great Judge of the whole Earth, going his Circuit from Heaven to the Plain of *Mamre*, and from *Mamre* to *Sodom*. This Judge comes to them to their own home, and keep his Aſſizes and General Goal-delivery in their own City, *v.* 21. *Deſcendam & videbo, the Cry of* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *is great, I will go down* my ſelf to them, and ſee how it ſtands with them.

This Judge condemns them not unheard, but admits Counſel to plead for, and Interceſſors to deprecate, as *Abraham* in the Text. So long as there lies a *Certierari* from an higher Court, or an Appeal to an higher Court, the Caſe is not deſperate, though the Judge ſhould not do right; for there is a future Remedy to be hoped for. If the whole State were incenſed againſt me, yet I can find an eſcape to another Country: If all the World perſecute me, yet if I be an honeſt Man, I have a Supreme Court in my ſelf; and I am at Peace in being acquitted by my own Conſcience.

But God is the unerring Judge of all the Earth, of this which I tread upon, and this Earth which I carry about me; and when he judgeth me, my Conſcience turns upon his ſide, and confeſſeth his Judgment to be right.

And therefore St. *Paul*'s Argument *Rom.* 3. ratifies and ſeconds *Abraham*'s Expoſtulation here;

Is

Is God unrighteous? God forbid: How then shall God judge the World? A particular Council may err, but then a general Council may help to rectifie that particular: The King may err, but then God, in whose Hand the King's Heart is, can rectifie him: But if God that judgeth all the Earth, judge thee, there is no Error to be assigned in his Judgment, no Appeal from God not throughly informed, to God better informed, for he always knoweth all Evidence before it is given, and therefore the larger the Jurisdiction, and higher the Court is, the more careful ought the Judge to be against wrong Judgment; for *Abraham*'s Expostulation reacheth in a measure to them; *Shall not the Judge of all* (or of a great part of the Earth) *do right?*

This Judge, *lastly*, comes not solitary or alone, but associated; for in the first and third Verses of this Chapter there are three of them, three Men stood by *Abraham*; and in the nineteenth Chapter and the first Verse, at *Sodom* it self where the Judgment was executed there are two of them (which is the number usual at these times with us.)

There came two Angels to Sodom: A Divine Bench, an honourable Trial; whomsoever we follow of all the Christian Interpreters, whether the Father generally, (as St. *Athanasius*, St. *Ambrose*, and *Epiphanius*) which expound these three to have been the three Persons of the adored Trinity, in three Humane Shapes assumed: Or whither we follow some latter Expositors, (as *Calvin* and others) who make them to be the second Person in Trinity, and two created Angels attending him.

For

For as for *Eben Ezra* and the reſt of the Jews, which make all three of them Angels and meer Creatures, they are ſufficiently confuted by that incommunicable Appellation of the Name *Jehovah*, which *Abraham* ſo often in this Chapter uſeth, when he ſpeaks to them: Thus *Abraham ſaw the day of Chriſt and rejoyced*, as our Lord himſelf teſtifieth, *John* 8. 56. for ſo to this very Apparition ſome good Expoſitors have referred it: He ſaw his day indeed, he ſaw this day of his, he received him into his Houſe, he feaſted him, he brought him on his way, he found gracious Audience with him, as an Interceſſor and Advocate for others; and all this, even then when Chriſt was going in his Indignation to judge *Sodom*. And in this Judgment, as in a Preludium, to ſhew how he will judge the whole World at the great Seſſions of the laſt day, and viſit it with the Flames of an univerſal Combuſtion.

We ſee then the Tribunal, and the Judge, and the Form of the Proceeding in the courſe of the whole Chapter: Let us come now preciſely to obſerve the Text, and hear the Advocate *Abraham* pleading here for the Righteous, that they may not be deſtroyed with the Wicked; his Plea is intended principally for *Lot*, who was his Nephew dear to him, and that lived amongſt the *Sodomites*; 'tis intended ſecondarily, for all righteous Perſons, if any other ſuch peradventure were living there: And in the laſt place, in a commendable Compaſſion he would have been glad alſo if it might have been extended to the whole City, and to ſo many Thouſands

ſands of Perſons as now were about periſhing in it; *Far be that from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Which words naturally point out their own diviſion, conſiſting apparently of two parts.

The firſt is, a Deteſtation or Averſation, *Far be that from thee.*

The other is, a Reaſon, a Motive, an Ætiology, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?*

In the Deteſtation again, which firſt offers it ſelf unto us, there are two things; the Subject of it, and the Degree of it; the Subject deteſted in the word *it* or *that*, *Far be that from thee.*

The Degree of the Deteſtation is twofold, *Gradus ſimplex*, the plain Degree, *be it from thee*; and *Gradus auctus*, or *Gradus cum adjectione*, the emphatical Degree, *be it far from thee.* And firſt I will ſpeak of theſe.

The Subject of the Deteſtation is expreſſed relatively, *that* or *it*, *far be it from thee*; and ſo points us back to that which is paſſed already in the former part of the Verſe, namely, *to ſlay the righteous with the wicked*: *far be that from thee.* So that here is a Suppoſition of *Abraham*'s and a Poſition, the Suppoſition is, That the Wicked no doubt are to be ſlain, and to be deſtroyed by the Magiſtrate: And no marvel that this is put *extra Controverſiam*, and taken for granted; for what Herbaliſt doth not root up noiſom Weeds? Or what Chyrurgeon doth not cut away all corrupt and putrified Fleſh? *Betimes will I root out all wicked doers from the City of the Lord* (ſaith the Royal Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 101. 8.) *Immedicabile vulnus enſe recidendum eſt, ne pars ſin-*

cera

cera trahatur, ſaith the Poet. What are the Wicked
nt. 2. 2. but Thorns, and what are Thorns but for the Fire?
al. 1. 4. What are they but Chaff, and what is the Chaff for, but to be ſevered from the Corn, and blown away of the Wind: A Seditious Diſturber of the publick Peace, is a moſt noxious and Savage wild Beaſt, ſaith the Orator, and if it fall into a Pit, let it be overwhelmed there, and come out no more, leaſt it do more hurt. It was with good Signification, that the Roman Magiſtrates cauſed to be borne before them *Faſces cum ſecuribus*, Rods and Axes both, whom the Rod corrects not, him the Axe chops off.

I take this therefore for granted, as *Abraham* doth, the Wicked are to be deſtroyed: And I come from his Suppoſition to his Poſition, The Righteous nevertheleſs muſt not be deſtroyed with them for company: If it falls out ſo that the Wicked cannot be cut down, unleſs the Righteous alſo periſh joyntly with them; even the Wicked rather are to be ſpared for the preſent, *Far be it from thee, to ſlay the righteous with the wicked.* 'Tis well this Plea can be in *Sodom*, here is ſome Comfort for us, worth our taking up by the way, the World ſhall never be ſo bad, but there may be ſome hope of finding ſome Righteous, even in thoſe places which
Joſhua 6. are worſt; in *Sodom* there was a *Lot*, in *Jericho* a
Rev. 3. 4. *Rahab*, in *Sardis* a few Names which had not de-
1 Kings 18. 3. filed their Garments. In *Ahab*'s Court a good *Obadiah*; in infamous *Nero*'s Family, *Chriſtians* and *Saints*, Phil. 4. 22. The Devil hath but ſowed
Matt. 13. 25. Tares amongſt the Wheat, he could not ſo root the

the Corn it ſelf out, but that in every Field God will have ſome Wheat. 'Tis a moſt true Axiom in the Schools, *Malum non poteſt exiſtere niſi in bono*, Evil cannot exiſt or be, but in ſomething which is good; and therefore cannot wholly eat out and deſtroy all Good.

And here is a Caution alſo for thoſe who have the Sword of Judicature and Authority in their Hands: Be wiſe ye that are Judges of the Earth, pre-judge not a Man wholly by his Place, nor yet by his Company; though the Clamours of the Sins of a Place in general, be as the Clamour and the Cry of *Sodom*; yet *deſcendite & videte*, look into it nearer, and diſtinguiſh of particulars.

In *Sodom* there was a *Lot*; amongſt *Joſeph*'s malicious Brethren there was a *Reuben* that diſ- Gen. 27. 22.
ſwaded the Murther of the Child; with the Robbers that were juſtly Crucified, there was a guiltleſs Jeſus. Even out of *Nazareth*, in deſpight of Luke 23. 41.
the Jewiſh Proverb, *John* 1. 46. there may come ſomething which is good: In one and the ſame Goal there may be as well as ſome Malefactors, ſome that are as unjuſtly ſuſpected. In one and the ſame Indictment, there may be ſome Nocent and ſome Innocent.

But I touch upon theſe Matters only by the way, but will inſiſt upon the Propoſition it ſelf which *Abraham* lays down here, *The Righteous muſt not be deſtroyed with the Wicked*; *he which ſlays the Righteous with the wicked*, ſaith *Abraham*, *to him the righteous are as the wicked, but that muſt not be, far be that from thee.*

And ſure it is an invincible Argument, for how foul Injuſtice is it, *Tam in equalibus equalia tribuere*, to deal alike with Perſons ſo unlike. How horrible an Exorbitancy were it, that they ſhould be all one in our Valuation, whom ſo many and unſpeakable Differences have diſtinguiſhed in their own Conditions; I mean the Righteous and the Wicked, their own Intentions which they ſhoot at diſtinguiſh them, the one aims at direct Honeſty and heavenly Piety; the other, at baſe Profit and earthly Pleaſure; their Principles which they go by diſtinguiſh them, the one meaſures his Actions by the publick Good, the other by his private; their Fruits redounding to the Common-wealth do diſtinguiſh them; the one are *paces reipublice*, and the other *faces*; their choice of converſing doth diſtinguiſh them, they come not at each other. The poſitive Laws of Men diſtinguiſh them, they appoint Reward for the one, but Puniſhments for the other.

Chriſt's Judgment doth diſtinguiſh them, he will ſet the one at his right Hand, the other at his Left; the place of their eternal Habitation doth diſtinguiſh them, for the one Heaven is prepared, for the other Hell: In one word, from Eternity they were differenced, and to Eternity they ſhall be: They ſtrove in the Womb like *Rebecca*'s Twins; and like the Smoak of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, when they are dead, they will have no Union; and ſhall then *the righteous be as the wicked?* If that be not *in equalibus equalia tribuere*, what is? Shall there be no difference of a Son and of a Slave? of a Friend and of an Enemy? of a dutiful Subject and

and a plotting Traytor? All other Differences have been reconciled, the Fair *European* and Foul *Negro* marry and live together; Fire and Water meet in the Ingrediency of the mix'd body, Light and Darkneſs concur in one *Crepuſculum*, one dawning of the day; but this diametrical Oppoſition of Righteous and Wicked, hath been and ſtill is at Diſcord, it could never be pacified; *A wicked Man is an Abomination to the Juſt, and he that is upright in his way, is an Abomination to the wicked.*

When I conſider therefore, that *Abraham* brings this as a Fundamental Axiom indiſputable, that *the righteous muſt not be ſlain with the wicked*; and that *they muſt not be unto us as the wicked*; and when I weigh the Reaſon of it, I am amazed to think of that ſhameful Lapſe of the good Emperor *Theodoſius*, who upon the account of the private Actions of ſome mutinous Perſons in *Theſſalonica*, ſent his Army upon the City, and promiſcuouſly ſlew the Innocent with the Guilty.

It would make one tremble to think of ſuch an erroneous Mandate; but it is enough to overwhelm any conſidering Perſon with Horrour and Amazement, to call to mind the Domeſtick Example of that Infernal Direction of the Romiſh Traytor, Father *Garnet*, who being not a Military Prince, but an Eccleſiaſtick profeſſing Peace, not an illiterate rude Souldier, but a Clerk of elaborate Education, not on a ſudden Rage unpremeditated, but upon Deliberation more fully adviſed, ſhould warrant a more Barbarous Reſolution, for being asked by the Popiſh Conſpirators of the Gunpowder Treaſon, *Whither it was lawful for them*

to deſtroy in our Parliament Houſe many good Men for Company with more bad, (that is, ſuch as were their Favourers with ſuch as were not) anſwered, *Yea, it was*, Si in grande emolumentum Eccleſiæ Romanæ ceſſurum ſit, *ſo it might bring evident Advancement and Benefit to the Roman Church.*

If this Oracle did come (as there are good grounds to believe it did) from the then Poſſeſſor of the Apoſtolical Chair at *Rome*, he was but a painted Wall, and Vice-Demon upon Earth: Doth he claim to be Judge of all the World, and doth he command *the righteous to be ſlain with the wicked?* I am ſure that Judge of all the World, with whom *Abraham* here conferreth, is of other Sentiments, unleſs he will take a ſpice of Manicheiſm, and make two Judges of all the World, one good one, which muſt needs be God, and another evil, which muſt be the Devil.

But I muſt not, like another *Tarquinius*, ſtrike off the tops only of the talleſt Poppies, tax none but only the Emperor *Theodoſius*, and the Romiſh Pontifex *Maximus*; but the truth is, there are few Men living, of what Condition or Quality ſoever, but one time or other, more or leſs, offend againſt this Rule, and make *the righteous as the wicked.*

And to comprize it ſummarily, four ways it may be done:

Firſt, By indiſcreet Pitty.
Secondly, By prepoſterous Zeal.
Thirdly, By Atheiſtical Neglect.
Fourthly, By diabolical Malice.

Theſe

These I will very briefly treat of. *First*, It is done by indiscreet Pitty, when we are so childishly Compassionate, that we destroy not them that are incorrigibly Wicked; when like *Joash* the King of *Israel*, we smite but thrice at *Aram*, whereas we ought for to smite five or six times till they were consumed; when like *Ahab* we let go *Benhadad*, the Man appointed for to die, whom God hath delivered into our Hands, when we find Manslaughter for Willful Murther, and with-hold the Hand of Justice from them, which with-hold not the Hand of Violence from their Brethren; this is to make *the righteous as the wicked*, for it gives the Wicked the priviledge of Indemnity, which should be peculiar to the Righteous; yea, and more than so, by sparing the Wicked, consequently it destroys the Righteous, it leaves that Serpentine Brood, which will be in the end the Destruction of them.

2 Kings 13.

1 Kings 20.

Secondly, By Prepostrous Zeal, we make *the Righteous as the Wicked*; when we are too furiously hot upon the spur, when we hasten so to abolish the Wicked, that necessarily we involve the Righteous in the same Ruin, when we are more precipitant than *John* himself, that was so furious a Driver; for he would not let loose his armed Men upon the Priests of *Baal*, till he had taken order effectually that there was no Servant of the Lord *Jehovah* left amongst them. God himself, to shew that he would ever discriminate the Righteous from the Wicked, he would not bring the Deluge (*Gen.* 7. 13.) upon the World of the Ungodly,

2 Kings 10.

Ungodly, till he ſaw that *Noah* was entered into the Ark: Nor would he ſend the deſtroying Angel over *Egypt*, till he knew that the Houſes of the
d. 12. 23. Children of *Iſrael* were ſprinkled with the Paſchal Blood. Neither would he ſuffer the Tares in the Goſpel (*Matt.* 13. 29.) to be plucked up before the Harveſt, leſt the Wheat alſo ſhould miſcarry with them. Vice muſt not be ſtabbed through the Loines of Vertue, as in a condemned Woman pleading Pregnancy, our merciful Laws worthily expect the Delivery of her Innocent Child. *Let* Rahab *and her Family be brought ſafe out, and then let* Jericho *be deſtroyed.*

Thirdly, We make *the Righteous like the Wicked*, by Atheiſtical Neglect, when we equally regard neither; when if Gain ſo invite us, we promiſcuouſly oppreſs both: Like that Popiſh Army which having taken a City mixedly inhabited by Proteſtants and Papiſts, put them all indifferently to the Sword, becauſe they would finger the whole Spoil; and when thoſe of their own Popiſh Superſtition fell at their Knees and cried, *We are Catholicks*; they anſwered, *The better for your Souls*; and that was all the Courteſie that they ſhewed them.

Fourthly, It is done by Diabolical Malice, when Men are at a Defiance with God, and take their Pay in the Camp of Lucifer, when the Righteous are the Men of their Hatred, and they purpoſely ſet themſelves to deſtroy them, but to ſpare the Wicked. When they cry of Murtherous *Barabbas*, *Let*

Let him have his Pardon; but of the Holy Jesus, *Crucifie him, Crucifie him.* The Righteous are then not only as the Wicked, but in a much worse case than the Wicked. *Abraham* desired that they might be better than they, but here they may be glad if they may be but as they. So as of old *Aristides* must have the Ostraciſm, and be baniſhed for his Juſtneſs, *Nemo apud nos frugi ſit, nemo excellat, aut ſi excelluerit abeat.* The *Epheſians*, when they baniſhed a worthy Perſon, were not aſhamed to proclaim the Reaſon, becauſe they would have no Man to excel above the reſt; if any Man would be better than others, let him pack away from their Dominions. But I hope no ſuch vain and unequal Dealings will be countenanced in our times, this were to make the appearance of Goodneſs more prejudicial than the Evidence and Conviction of Evil. Such Practices ought to be far from us.

What I have already ſpoken, ſhall ſuffice for a curſory Declaration of the ways whereby we do make *the Righteous as the Wicked*; of all which four kinds we muſt ſay as *Abraham* here ſaith unto God, *Far be they from us*; all of them muſt be the due ſubjects of our Abomination and deteſting Averſation; in ſpecial indeed Injuſtice, but in general all Sin and Vice; which our Gracious King, as the true Vice-gerent of God, is now endeavouring to root out, that God may continue to protect this Nation, living in a Courſe of Righteouſneſs, as he hath done already above our Deſerts.

Thus

Thus having finiſhed the Abhorrence or Abomination *to ſlay the Righteous with the Wicked*, or to eſteem *the Righteous as the Wicked, be it from thee, yea, be it far from thee.* The former, the plain Degree, *be it from thee*, Injuſtice eſpecially; in general, all Iniquity; *be it all from thee.*

Here we may ſee the vile Condition of Sin and Impiety; no Commerce can it have with God; no Union with his Nature; no Abode or Footing in his Preſence; it may ſay like Vagabond *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 14. *Behold, thou haſt driven me out this day from the face of the Earth; and from thy face ſhall I be hid, and I ſhall be a Fugitive and a Vagabond in the Earth: And it ſhall come to paſs, that every one that findeth me, ſhall ſlay me.* And we need no reaſon of this Sentence of perpetual Exile, *Be it from thee*, theſe three words, *It from thee*, are a moſt compleat Reaſon; *it*, which is Miſery; *from thee*, which art Bleſſedneſs; *it*, which is Death; *from thee*, which art Life it ſelf; *it*, which is Uncleanneſs; *from thee*, which art Purity; *it*, which is Crookedneſs; *from thee*, which art Rectitude; *it*, which is Darkneſs; *from thee*, which art Light it ſelf: A thouſand Volumes compiled by never ſo *Ciceronian* a Pen, a thouſand Tongues of Men and Angels, could not more graphically paint out the Curſedneſs of Sin and Injuſtice as theſe three words have done, *It from thee*, it is baniſhed from God, the Idea of Goodneſs, the Center and the Circumference of Perfection; and when it is ſaid to be baniſhed from God, we muſt conceive it alſo (for our own Inſtruction) baniſhed from all which any way partake either of the Nature or Name

of

of God, from all Judges firſt, for ſo the Scripture ſaith of them, *Dixi Dii eſtis*, I have ſaid ye are Gods, yea, univerſally from all Men; for Man is in a true Senſe *pars Dei*, a piece of God, and therefore Sin ought not to be harboured in us. *In God we live, move, and have our Beings.* *David* ſaith, That God made Man a little lower than the Angels; the word will beare, A little lower than God: And indeed our Souls and Bodies are the very Characters of the Divine Image: Our Underſtanding, Will and Memory, are the *Veſtigia*, the Characters of the Divine Trinity; and our Humane Nature born of the Bleſſed Virgin, hath perſonal Union with the eternal Word. Theſe things plainly evince, that we have ſome Participation of the Divine Nature, and that the Regenerate partake of the ſame Spirit with God; and therefore this, *Be it from thee*, muſt take place with us alſo. *Be it from* God, and from all that partake of the Nature and the Name of God.

I have done with the *Gradus ſimplex*, the plain Degree, but *Abraham* contents not himſelf thus, he adds, *Gradum auctum*, *Gradum cum adjectione*, the emphatical Degree, *Be it far from thee*; and he adds this when he ſpeaks to God, not to wiſh a thing that is not, but to expreſs and acknowledge a thing that is.

The Truth is, there is none but God, of whom we can properly ſay, that Sin is far from him: A Creature may be actually free from Sin, and ſo Sin may be abſent from it; but it is not far abſent from it; as it is ſaid to *Cain*, *Sin lieth at the door.* Gen. 4. 7.

Every rational Creature hath a Door, whereby it may let in Sin, a poſſibility of being depraved and embracing it; but only the eternal God he hath no door, whereby he can let in Sin, his Nature hath an infinite Repugnancy and Incompaſſibility with it; an Angel may Sin, and yet remain an Angel; a Man may Sin, and yet remain a Man; but God cannot have Sin in him and remain God; it cannot conſiſt with his Eſſence, and therefore far it is indeed from him, and far be that Blaſphemous Doctrine from us, to make God the Author of any Sin; he cannot be the ſubject of Sin in himſelf, nor can he be the Efficient of Sin in others.

Therefore let us enforce our ſelves to a Sacred Emulation of God's glorious Prerogatives as far as may be; let not only Sin be from us, *in gradu ſimplici*, but *in gradu auctо*, let it be far from us; there cannot be too great a diſtance between us and it, *ratione contagii*, in regard of the Contagiouſneſs of it, there cannot be too great a diſtance, if we flee not from it, it will infect us. 'Tis like a Baſilisk, it kills as far as it can be ſeen; 'tis like a *Syren*, it enchants as far as it can be heard. 'Twere good that there were a Peſt-houſe for the Wicked, as there is for them that have the Plague, a *Thracian Boſphorus* where they might live by themſelves, and have no acceſs to other Men to Poyſon them; for it is not enough for us not to approach to them, but they will approach to us.

Again, *Ratione ſupplicii*, in regard of the Puniſhment of it, there cannot be too great a diſtance, though we practice it not our ſelves, if we

we be but in company of them that practice it; if they be in our Houſes, if they be in our Towns, we fare the worſe for them; for one *Achan* the whole Army of *Iſrael* flies before their Enemies. Sin was committed on the Earth by *Adam*, and the very Heavens felt the Smart of it; there were malignant Influences then added to thoſe Cœleſtial Bodies, which had not at the firſt been created in them.

If Sin get a footing in our Servants, in our Followers, 'tis like an Enemy that hath got a Sconce, or a Cittadel, too near us, from thence it will Gall us too; and therefore when it offers to come and dwell with us, we muſt anſwer it as *Tully* anſwers *Catiline* in the like caſe, *Nullo modo iiſdem in parietibus tute eſſe poſſumus, qui magno in periculo ſumus, quod iiſdem in manibus verſemur.* Far be it from us.

I have dwelt long enough upon the Averſation, *Far be it from thee*; I will not therefore long detain this Honourable Aſſembly, but recompence it with as much brevity in this other which follows, the Reaſon or Ætiology, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* In which words take notice briefly of two things.

Firſt, The Perfection of Judges; and then the Judge of Perfection. Here you may obſerve a Judge *in abſtracto*, what it is; and *in concreto*, where or in whom it is.

First, Take notice of the Perfection of a Judge, *in abſtracto*, what it is: It is to do Equity and Right. That is the End and Scope of all Judges, and of all Judgments; that is the Pole-ſtar of all Judicial Actions; Shall not he do Right who is ordained to that end, to decide Controverſies of Right and Wrong? Shall not a Judge do Right?

You have heard the Perfection of a Judge *in abſtracto*, what it is; there remains the Perfection of a Judge *in concreto*, where or in whom it is; 'tis not every where, nay, 'tis no where but in God. Abſolute Perfection is the incommunicable Property of the Deity, all created Natures, *Tantum abſunt à Perfectione, quantum à Divinitate*, but in God there is Abſolute Perfection. Negative Queſtions in this kind in Scripture, pre ſuppoſe always Affirmative Anſwers, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?* Yes, he will do it, do it others, or do they not; this Judge will do it.

So that God is here deſcribed a perfect Judge in two reſpects:

First, In the Extent of his Juriſdiction; and in the Exerciſe of it.

In the Extent of it, He is a Judge of all the Earth. In the Exerciſe of it, He will do Right, he cannot but do Right; *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?*

The

The Extent of his Juriſdiction is the whole Earth; 'tis not a Country or two that confine his Circuit; 'tis not a Province or two that bound his Empire; he ſcorneth to borrow a Title as the Old *Romans* did, from one or two Conquered Nations, *Sarmaticus*, *Geticus*, *Numidicus*, he hath that which others long for, and cannot have, *Catholicus*, *Oecumenicus*: He needs no *plus ultra*, as that *Chartemayn* who confuted his rich Title with his craving Motto, for all the whole Univerſe is his. There is none therefore ſo weak here, but if he be Oppreſſed, ſees an higher Tribunal that he may fly unto. There is none ſo ſtrong here, ſo armed with Authority and Favour, but if he be an Oppreſſor, he ſees a Tribunal that he may fear. No wonder that *Felix* trembled when he heard St. *Paul* diſpute of this Judgment, and of this Judge. From all other Courts there lies an Appeal to him, but from him there lies no Appeal to any other: There is a Commiſſion, againſt which no Prohibition can be brought; we muſt not come there with our *Nemo bis judicabitur de eodem, bis judicabimur de iiſdem*; all Cauſes that have been heard in this World, ſhall be heard again in that Prerogative-Court of Heaven; and what was right adjudged here, ſhall be ratified there; and what was wrong adjudged here, ſhall be repealed there. And finally, What was never heard here at all, yet ſhall be deciſively ordered there.

I will

I will ſhut up my Diſcourſe in a few words, (which it becomes me to ſay) to demonſtrate, that the Supream Judge of Heaven and Earth will ever do Right, (according to the Concluſion of the Text) doth moſt undeniably appear, with relation to the Church of *England*, (as it is by Law eſtabliſhed) in whoſe Cauſe he hath been pleaſed of late to manifeſt his Power and Goodneſs moſt remarkably; and not only in our Days, but he hath done the like in former Ages; for in reſpect of its Doctrine, Diſcipline and External Rites, he guided the ſolid Foundation thereof, by that admirable young Prince King *Edward* the Sixth; and ſupported it by the Steadineſs of the Magnanimous Princeſs Queen *Elizabeth*, who (during all her long and glorious Reign) would never admit of any Alterations; no, not in the very Out-works, the External Rites thereof, (which are Securities to the main Fortreſs of our Religion) though ſhe was frequently ſollicited thereunto by Men of great Fame and Judgment; and though in the 34th Article of our Church it is owned, That the External part of its Worſhip may admit of Alterations (by publick Authority) upon Emergent Cauſes, and for Reaſons demonſtrably and apparently tending to the Publick Good; and when Times and Mens Manners do require it.

And this Church hath been ſince adorned by the Piety and Devout Practice of the late Virtuous and Bleſſed Queen *Mary*, (who, by the Countenance and Conſent of King *Charles* the Second, was

was moſt happily Married to His Preſent Majeſty, notwithſtanding all the Secret Oppoſing Intrigues of the Renegado Jeſuits:) which Famous Princeſs lived and dyed in all the Obſervances of this Church like a Primitive Saint.

And it has been not only dignified by the high Reſpect borne toward it by theſe two eminent Princeſſes, who ſet two ſuch Examples as are hardly imitable by the very beſt and braveſt of Womenkind; but it was defended and cheriſhed by the Learning and peaceful Temper of King *James* the Firſt, and by the Piety of Queen *Anne*. And it hath been exceedingly honoured and embelliſhed by the Conſtancy, Patience and Charity of the Devout Martyr King *Charles* the Firſt.

And thus ſtood it out againſt all Aſſaults, during the Reign of all our Princes ſince the Reformation. (Queen *Maries* ſhort Reign, and part of the twenty Years of our Unhappy Civil Wars, and fooliſh Anarchical Governments excepted) after which it was re-eſtabliſhed in courſe of Law upon the wonderful and peaceable Reſtauration of King *Charles* the Second, who at his death left it upon its own Eſtabliſhment.

But as to two other Princes that have poſſeſſed the Throne (ſince the Reformation) Queen *Mary* the Firſt, and the late King *James* the Second, they both were pleaſed to give it publick, high and kind Characters at their firſt Acceſſions to their Crowns; and whilſt the Men of our Communion were buſily fixing them into their Royal Authorities,

Authorities; and the latter of them, did for ſome conſiderable number of Years, outwardly comply with its Obſervances; (ſo long as the Polititians of the Court of *Rome* would ſuffer him) but their deep Engagements and Confederacies with the *Romans* Party, would not admit them for to countenance it further, and that they openly declined Communion with it, ſhould be no Argument for any Proteſtant upon Earth to diſlike its Conſtitution, but the rather to embrace and ſupport it.

How Queen *Maries* Severities increaſed, *Gentlemen*, your *Suffolk* Anceſtors ſoon felt; and if it had not been for the ſeaſonable Reſcue of King *William*, we might long before this time have Sorrowfully felt alſo, how King *James* would have increaſed; had not King *William* delivered this Church out of all its Imminent and Surprizing Perils; and ſecured it by his Valour, Policy and Indefatigable Vigilance (exerted both in the Fatigues of the Field, and the Management of the Treaty) and with the Security thereof he hath ſuperadded the ancient Luſtre to the Realm of *England*, of becoming once more the Ballance to all the Publick Affairs of *Europe*.

And he hath pleaſed to eſpouſe it for his Grand and Profeſſed Deſign, to endeavour to Found us ſuch a Settlement, as may ſecure both our Religious and Civil Rights to our Poſterities.

And towards all theſe he hath made as vigorous Attempts, as the Policy, Reſolution and Integrity of

of the moſt Heroick of our Princes, or the Braveſt of Men can parallel.

Therefore we have the higheſt Obligation to follow that Example of the Grateful *Iſraelites* towards King *Solomon*, recorded in 1 *Kings* 8. 66. (with with I ſhall conclude.)

> *To Praiſe God, and to Pray daily for the long Life and Grandeur of the King; and to return to our Houſes joyful and glad of Heart, for all the Goodneſs that the moſt righteous God hath ſhewed unto his Anointed, and unto us his People.*

The Second Sermon.

Zechariah 7. 9, 10.

Thus ſpeaketh the Lord of Hoſts, ſaying, Execute true Judgment, and ſhew Mercy and Compaſſion every Man to his Brother. And oppreſs not the Widow, nor the Fatherleſs, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine Evil againſt his Brother in your Heart.

MY Song ſhall be now, as *David*'s was, of *Mercy* and *Judgment*. *Judgment* and *Mercy* are the proper Subjects for this time, in which *Righteouſneſs* and *Peace* will the moſt gracefully kiſs each other.

The liberty of the Goſpel hath no way abrogated the Morality of the Law, for *Chriſt came not to deſtroy, but to fulfil it*: So that this Precept

of executing *true Judgment and Merty*, is not at all excluded from the Doctrine of the Son of God, but he ratifies the Commands of his Father, saying, *Judge not according to the Appearance, but judge righteous Judgment.*

John 7. 24.

The Nature of this Judgment is either Political or Moral; Political, as being proper to a Supreme Governour, and his Subordinate Magistrates; or Moral, as implying an Equity between Private Men; whereby every Man is bound, both by the Law of God and Nature, to shew Mercy and Compassion towards his dejected Brother. By the Law of God, because he so commands; by the Laws of Men, because we are all the Sons of *Adam*: Therefore *execute true Judgment, and shew Mercy.*

It will be a proper Introduction to the rest, that I speak generally (though briefly) of Judgment in a Politick State: *Jethro* the Father-in-Law of *Moses*, sets forth a President of a righteous Judge, according to the Qualities which he ought for to be endued with, saying, *Thou shalt provide out of all the People, able Men, such as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness, and place such to be Rulers over them.* Able Men, or Men of Courage and Wisdom; they must be Industrious, able to dispatch and expedite Causes, *Valentes Ingenio*, Men of ready Wit and Dexterity.

Exod. 18. 21.

Secondly,

Secondly, Constancy and Strength are requisite, lest they quit a good Cause for fear of the Mighty; those that have not an adequate Power derived upon them, are dangerously Ambitious of such a Dignity: Therefore said the Wise Man, *Seek not to be a Judge, being not able to take away Iniquity, lest at any time thou fear the Person of the Mighty, and lay a Stumbling-block in the way of thy Uprightness.*

Thirdly, They must be Men of Estate as well as of Power, of eminent Birth and Estimation; therefore *Moses* in the Fifteenth of *Deuteronomy*, took the chief of the Tribes, Wise Men and known, and made them Heads over the People.

Our Modern Polititians therefore affirm, *Futius divites quam pauperes in Magistratum elegantur.* And they must be Men fearing God, that being the Foundation of all Virtue: Besides, if Men of Might fear not God, when in regard of their great and publick Power, they fear not Men, they are apt to fall into many Outrages; but it behoveth him that judgeth others, to have an exact respect unto his Superor Judge, to whom he must give an account of all his Acts; let them look unto God in whose stead they are.

They must be Men of Truth, both understanding the Truth, that they may distinguish right from wrong: And also Followers of the Truth in their Will and Practise; for there is a Speculative Truth, in Discerning and Judging; and a Practicable

Practicable Truth, in following a right Judgment.

They must seek out the Truth by Witnesses, Writings and Evidences, and having found it out, give Judgment accordingly: And they must be Constant, and not changeable in their Sentences and Decrees; and they must hate Covetousness, be so far from that meanness of Spirit, as to have an Abhorrence of it.

God who commands others to do Justice, is pleased for to shew the highest Example thereof in himself; in him there is nothing Unjust or Evil, as Coldness hath no place in Fire, nor Blackness in Snow, nor Obscurity in the Sun, no more hath Sin any place in God, nor should it have any shelter or countenance from Men.

This prescribed Traytor of our Prince, This Out-law'd Fugitive of our Sovereign, should not be found harboured with them: God hath put the Sword into the Magistrates hand to punish, and he expects that he should not bear it in vain, Execution is the Life of the Law; the Execution is as necessary as the Promulgation. He that hath Authority, and punisheth not Disorders in others, is consequentially guilty of them himself: But they must not punish more than the Offence, that is too much; and to punish less, makes but Offenders Insolent and Multitudinous.

Justice is *Columna & corona reipublicæ*, it is the Cement which holds the general parts of the Body Politick

Politick together, it is as the Nerves and Sinews thereof, and by it the Throne is eſtabliſhed.

Judges are *Juris indices*, they are *Jus dicere* and *Jus dare*, if they do not, then is the Law weakened and perverted, and made to patronize Evil, and Wickedneſs is committed under Authority, and the Law doth turn its edge againſt the Innocent; and that which ſhould be a Defence, becomes a Maze of Briars and Thorns, and the Rod of Juſtice is turned into a Serpent of Subtilty.

And ſo it is, if the Jurors give not a ſound Verdict, but make the worſt ſide to ſeem the beſt; this were to be wiſe to do Evil, and not *verum dicere*, as their Office ſignifies. In Juſtice we are not to reſpect Perſons (though that be commanded otherwhere, yet it is forbidden here) here the Cauſes are to be heard, more than the Parties obſerved; the Equity of Cauſes is to be weighed, not the Quality of Perſons; if otherwiſe, it makes the Law but like Spiders Webs, in which the ſmall Flies are ſtrangled, whilſt the great ones eſcape and break through. Hence haughty ſucceſsful Robbers wear Chains of Gold, whilſt poor Pilferers are bound with Fetters of Iron.

The taking of Gifts is a ſecret Preventer of Juſtice, it makes Men to over-ſee God's Laws and the King's; undermines and devours the Houſes of the poor Widow and the deſolate Orphan; theſe blind the Eyes of the Wiſe, and ſtop the Mouths

Mouths of the Skillful: To ſome Perſons the greateſt Evidence is not half ſo convincing as a ſecret Gift; though where Right is, there is the great Point.

It is no wonder that good Cauſes fall not out well, if many Hands be open to receive Gifts.

It is no wonder if the Evidence of the Witneſſes be ſtrained and diverted; but let ſuch conſider, what meaſure they meet, ſhall at the laſt be meaſured unto them again; not only by God's Judgment hereafter; but upon the Obſervance of his righteous Vicegerents, this Retribution will overtake them in this Life to their Shame and Sorrow.

Let not thoſe therefore that ſhould be the Supporters of others be their Supplanters; but let Juſtice and Equity be ſo exactly obſerved, that the Voice of Fraud may be no more heard amongſt us; when the Contentious Violence of Men did overflow the Banks of Right, then would God have the Law take ſtrength to it ſelf, to curb Mens fiery Paſſions and Attempts: To this end Judges and Officers of the Law were appointed to ſee the Laws impartially executed, without wreſting or extorting: This is the end of the Law, the Office of the Judge, and the Occaſion of this time.

The Charge of the Judicial Office is great, therefore to him that gives the Charge, a Charge is given of God, *Thou ſhalt not wreſt Judgment*; thou

thou ſhalt not reſpect Perſons, nor take a Gift, for the Judgment is not only before Men, but before God alſo.

If they that ſit in Judgment proſpect him that judgeth all the Earth, in the exactneſs of his Judgment, and follow it, their Integrity will grow Proverbial, Like the Judgment of *Bochoris*, or the Sentence of *Bias*; he that thus ſetteth him before his Eyes, ſhall never fear what *Cambyſes* the *Perſian* made *Othones* to do, *Se ſamnem excoriavit, & filium ejus Othonem corio inſidere coegit:* For he hath here a great Terror and Reſtraint, he knoweth that God ſtandeth in the Congregation of the Judges.

But a People ſo wiſely Zealous of their Laws and Liberties (as the *Engliſh*) will not be eaſily impoſed upon; and ſuch Sages of the Laws as we have, that adminiſter ſo exactly, need not any ſuch tremendous Memorials.

As in the Pallace of the *Ottoman Emperor*, four of the moſt Honourable Baſſa's ſit in Judgment in the great Hall, and the Grand Seignior himſelf, through a ſecret Window, unheard and unſeen, hears the Complaints of his People, and the Sentences of his Judges: So is our Great God conſcious unto all that Men do here, in their Deputations under him; they muſt therefore remember that no Greatneſs can exempt them from his high Cenſure, when they willingly corrupt themſelves.

The *Egyptians* of old would not ſuffer the Bodies of their Kings to have Royal Interments,

till their Lives were ſcan'd, by a ſevere Examination of their Management of the Regal Scepter whilſt they had it; and as that was approved, their Funeral Honours were augmented or diminiſhed; ſhewing that all Earthly Greatneſs hath an undoubted account, whereunto it is liable and ſtoopeth after Death.

And Bleſſed is he who ſo judgeth here, as that his Judgment may be approved by that Judge there, he which putteth ſo all Injuſtice far from him, and truly diſtinguiſheth between the Righteous and the Wicked, ſhall be abſolved by that Great Lord, whoſe Servants he himſelf abſolveth, and whoſe Enemies he condemneth. Bleſſed is this Judge as to himſelf, and Bleſſed are the People over whom he preſideth.

It is the Judges Buſineſs and Profeſſion to do Right; therefore the *Egyptian* Hieroglyphick painted him without Hands, with his Eyes almoſt ſhut, and from his Neck a Saphire hanging down, with this word *Veritas* engraven upon it. He muſt have no Hands for Bribes, no Eyes for Siniſter Reſpects, or to reſpect Perſons.

To the ſame purpoſe the Image of *Jupiter* was made in *Creta* without Ears: He muſt have no Ears to hear Importunity againſt Juſtice.

The *Areopagites* for the ſame cauſe never ſate in Judgment in the Day, but in the Night-time always, and by an obſcure Light, that they might not be moved by Apparel, Habits, Geſtures or Countenances of the Perſons ſummoned before them: And ſurely Injuſtice, though it be a Blemiſh

to

to any Man, yet it is not half so much a Blemish to another Man as to a Judge; distastful it is in any, but most of all in him.

And if Right be thus the Pole-star of all Judges in their Judicial Actions, we must conceive it to be so too in all others, in their Actions Subordinate to Judicial; yea, we must give it the due Extent of it.

If the Judge must Decree right, the Accuser also must Object right, the Witness must Testifie right, the Learned Counsellor must Plead right, and the Jury must Find right, *Ultimus finis dat mediis ordinem & mensuram*, all these will be Planetical sometimes, and have the proper Motions of their own Sphere, the Plaintiff is hot and fiery like *Mars*; the Defendant is Sullen and Froward like *Saturn*, the Advocate is Crafty and Wily like *Mercury*, the Witness is Variable and Changeable like *Luna*; but the Judge, like to the highest Orb of the Heavens, must over-rule all these inferior Spheres of the Planets, and carry them all along in his own diurnal Motion with himself.

But especially the Advocate must be looked into, that he may not too lightly dispense with himself, he thinks, though others are bound to the Right, yet he may Sophisticate and plead wrong; but Equity and Right is the Scope that he ought to aim at; if he will not give Right an helping hand, he should give it none at all.

The general Calling of a good Christian, is presupposed in all particular Callings, a Souldier must live by Fighting, but not in fighting a wicked

Quarrel; and he that Pleads ſhould live honourably by it, but not in bolſtering Oppreſſions againſt the Orphan and the Widow.

St. *Tertullian* in his Book of Idolatry, condemns all thoſe Chriſtians moſt deeply, who being Carvers, Painters, or Embroiderers; would do any Work whatſoever which had the leaſt and remoteſt Subordination to the decking of an Heathen Idol.

It were a goodly matter if the Pilot ſhould be bound to arrive at (or ſteer to) the right Haven, and the Oar-men be permitted to row towards the wrong: 'Twere a pretty deviſe, if the Captain were tied to lead the Army to the place of right Service, and the Sentinels have licenſe to miſ-inform him: And what were it then, if the Judge were enjoyned to award the true Sentence, and the Advocate be ſuffered to patronize the falſe.

The famous Civilian *Papinianus*, rather than he would defend the Emperor *Caracalla*'s barbarous Murther of his Brother, willingly admitted of death under that bloody Tyrant.

And which you will more wonder at, the no leſs famous *Ceſelius* in his Age, he would never be brought by Favour or Fear, ſo much as to draw a Conveiance of any of thoſe Lands, which *Anthony* and his Fellow-Triumvirs had given away in the Oppreſſion of the Roman Liberties.

Famous may the Memory be of ſuch Spirits, and long may the like flouriſh, and deterr or aſhame our Advocates from ſupporting corrupt Cauſes for large Fees: For their Pleadings ought not

not to be conſidered as Sophiſters Acts, tending to the Oſtentation and Exerciſe of Wit, but are ſerious and important Proceedings, that ought to aim totally at Equity and Right.

But the Text ſeemeth to require me to ſpeak ſomething of the Moral Equity that ought to be betwixt private Perſons: And that this may be more exerciſed, I will with the Prophet wiſh you by way of intreaty, to *Execute true Judgment*, *Lex talionis*, the Law of like for like is of great Antiquity, common as well with the *Gentiles* by the Law of Nature, as with the *Jews* by the Law of God, whereby we are taught not to uſe others as we would not be uſed our ſelves; to which accords that of our Bleſſed Saviour, *Whatſoever you would that Men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

In theſe Admonitions we are taught *Mercy and Compaſſion* when we have our Adverſary in a ſtraight, and to forgive the Delinquences of our Neighbours, as we hope to receive a Remiſſion of our Treſpaſſes committed againſt the Supreme Judge and Father of us all: For after the Execution of true Judgment, we are admoniſhed for to ſhew Mercy.

Amongſt the Heathens, the great *Alexander* is reported to have taken greater delight in Pardoning than Puniſhing an Offender. When *Bias* came to the Condemning of a Man he wept; and *Cicero* profeſſed, *Cum parcere vel ledere potuiſſem.*

iſſem, ignoſcendæ querelarum cauſas, non puniendi occaſiones; but to induce us by a greater Authority, God Almighty is our Preſident, and he is ſtiled *Merciful and Long-ſuffering*, and we by our Lord's Command ſhould be the like, *Be you Merciful as your Heavenly Father is Merciful:* And he adds thereunto a Benediction, *Bleſſed are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy.*

Let us therefore make no Separation between *Juſtice* and *Mercy*, but execute both truly: Let us be blind to inſinuating Impoſtors, and deaf to palliating Flatterers; it were better to want Senſe, than to judge an unrighteous Judgment, either erring againſt Juſtice or Mercy.

God required of the *Jews*, as a Demonſtration
. 58. 6, 7. of their Repentance, *To looſe the Bands of Wickedneſs, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppreſſed go free, and that they ſhould break every Yoke, to deal their Bread to the Hungry, and to bring the Poor that are caſt out to their Houſes, and when they ſaw the Naked that they cover them, and that they ſhould not hide themſelves from their own Fleſh.*

Afflict not the Poor, was the Precept of an ancient Philoſopher, and ſuitably the Prophet in the Text excites Mankind by way of Prohibition, not to oppreſs any Subject to Oppreſſion; *the Widow, nor the Fatherleſs; the Stranger, nor the Poor; and let none of you imagine Evil againſt his Brother in your heart.*

The Sin of Oppreſſion in former times was expiated by Death or Baniſhment, as may be ſeen

by

by ſome Edicts of our ancient Kings: It was condemned of old by the Prophet *Amos*, *Woe to them that make the Ephah ſmall, but the Shekel great*; to oppoſe the Oppreſſion of the Widow, let there be the Love of an Husband; of an Orphan, let there be the Affection of a Father; of a Stranger, let there be the Hoſpitality of *Abraham*; of the Poor, let there be the Charity of *Job*, He *delivered the Poor that cried, the Fatherleſs, and him that had none to help him. The Bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon* him: *And* he *cauſed the Widows heart to ſing for joy.* He *put on Righteouſneſs, and it cloathed him*; and *Judgment was* to him *as a Robe and a Diadem.* He *was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame.* He *was a Father to the Poor*; *and the cauſe which* he *knew not*, he *ſearched out.* Then he *brake the Jaws of the Wicked, and plucked the Spoil out of his Teeth.* Then *was* his *Glory freſh in* him, *and* his *Bow was renewed in* his *hand.* He relieved the Neceſſities of diſtreſſed Widowhood, and was a Father to the diſabled Orphans. Job 29. 12, &

As we hear the Complaints and Cries of others that are overwhelmed with Calamities, ſo God will hear us, and as we behold them, ſo will he behold us: Therefore ſtop not your Ears at the Cry of the Poor, for whoſo doth, he himſelf alſo ſhall cry aloud, and not be heard.

The Prophet *Iſaiah* pronounceth *Woe unto them that decree unrighteous Decrees, and write grievouſneſs which they have preſcribed: To turn aſide the Needy from Judgment, and to take away Right from the Poor* Iſa. 10. 1, 2,

Poor of the People, that Widows may be their Prey, and that they may rob the Fatherleſs. What will they *do in the day of Viſitation, and in the Deſolation that ſhall come from far? To whom* can they *flee for help? and where will they leave their Glory?*

The Prophet *Micah*, Chap. 2. Ver. 1, 2, 3. denounceth *Woe againſt them that practice Miſchief as often as it is in the power of their hands; That covet Fields, and take them by force; and Houſes, and take them violently. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, againſt the Family that doth oppreſs a Man and his Houſe, do I deviſe an evil, from which they ſhall not remove their Necks.* The Redeemer of the Poor and Afflicted is Mighty, and he will plead their Cauſe with their Oppreſſors. *Curſed* (ſaith the great Law-giver) *be he that perverteth the Judgment of the Stranger, Fatherleſs and Widow, and all the People ſhall ſay, Amen.* And this is repeated upon ſolemneſt time (in the Commination) by the conſtant Practice of our Church. Oppreſs not a Stranger, injure him not by Word or Deed, neither ſecretly by Fraud, nor openly by Violence; but inſtead of Injury ſhew Kindneſs: We may learn a Preſident from the *Iſraelites* who were Strangers and Bond-ſlaves in *Egypt*, they did feel by Experience, what it was for to uſe Strangers cruelly, and learn'd by that Experience (and by God's eſpecial Command) to have Compaſſion upon others.

Beſides, there are many Reaſons why Strangers ſhould be reſpected, Men of every Nation, Language and Country, have originally one common Father,

Father, and have the Stamp of the ſame Omnipotency upon them.

The next kind of Oppreſſion is of the Widow and Fatherleſs; as we are to ſhew Pitty and Compaſſion to Strangers that are in Miſery, ſo we are alſo to ſhew Pitty to them that are in Miſery which are no Strangers, as Widows and Orphans. As we muſt not turn aſide the Stranger from his Right, neither muſt we the Widow or the Fatherleſs; if Men regard not their Tears, their God will; and whom they Contemn, he will Favour; though none at all are to be wronged and afflicted, yet theſe eſpecially muſt not be hurt, *Quia defenſorem non habent* (ſaith good St. *Chryſoſtom*) the one wanteth a Father, and the other an Husband.

Oppreſs not the Poor (ſaith the Text) in general; the Poor are commonly oppreſſed by Extortion in Uſury; this is not felt much in the beginning, but at the laſt, *Devorat totam hominis ſubſtantiam*, theſe Extortioners live upon the Poor, and eat them up by their Severities, like Savage Beaſts, by biting of others they feed themſelves; the Men I ſpeak of, are ſuch as make an unreaſonable and illegal Gain of Money, catching at the preſent Neceſſity of others.

Theſe Men conſider not, that they are *not to oppreſs the Widow, nor the Fatherleſs, the Stranger, nor the Poor.*

Oppreſs not, out of theſe Prohibitions, we muſt look to do their contraries; ſince *the Lord of Hoſts*

Poor of the People, that Widows may be their Prey, and that they may rob the Fatherleſs. What will they *do in the day of Viſitation, and in the Deſolation that ſhall come from far? To whom* can they *flee for help? and where will they leave their Glory?*

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Oppreſs not, out of theſe Prohibitions, we muſt look to do their contraries; ſince *the Lord of Hoſts*

in the Text, hath commanded us for to *ſhew Compaſſion every Man to his Brother, and that none of us ſhould imagine Evil againſt his Brother in his heart.*

In the Text (you have ſeen) there are four Precepts, two Imperative, and two Prohibitive: The firſt two, of *Judgment* and *Mercy*; the ſecond, of *Oppreſſion* and *Malice*.

The Imperative Precepts are, *Execute true Judgment, and ſhew Mercy and Compaſſion every Man to his Brother.*

The Prohibitive Precepts, *Oppreſs not the Widow, nor the Fatherleſs, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine evil againſt his Brother in your heart.*

The Author of them both is God, *Thus ſpeaketh the Lord of Hoſts, ſaying.*

I have finiſhed all the Parts, except the very laſt, which prohibits Malice; *And let none of you imagine Evil againſt his Brother in your heart.*

I ſhall for order ſake (now in the Concluſion) ſpeak of this branch of the Text, and ſomewhat the more largely, becauſe it is to be preſumed, that Inſolence and croſſneſs of Temper brings many Perſons hither; and that their Proſecutions are rather the Effects of Malice, than Deſires of Right; ſuch Mens impertinent, but evil and miſchievous Imaginations, give unneceſſary Trouble to the Court and Country, and deſerve the Magiſtrates

ſtrates Reproofs, and to meet with Deriſion and Diſappointment from all men.

As the Heart is the beginning of Life, and the Elaboratory of the vital Spirits, ſo it is the Magazine and Store-houſe of Humane Cogitations whither good or bad, and whereon, as upon an Anvil, are forged thoſe Thoughts which the Tongue its Inſtrument brings to light; for ſo our Bleſſed Lord informs us, That *out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh. A good Man out of the good Treaſure of the Heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil Man out of the evil Treaſure, bringeth forth evil things. Out of the Heart* (ſaith our Lord) *proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Theſts, Falſe-witneſs, Blaſphemies*; therefore the Holy Prophet ſhut up his Exhortation with a Prohibition from ſuch Offences, nominating the place wherein they have reſidence, *and let none of you imagine evil againſt his Brother in your heart.* Matt. 12. 34

Here obſerve firſt, The Offence and Imagination of Evil made apparent by Blaſphemy, Envy, Calumny, Revenge, Falſe-witneſs, Murder.

Secondly, The Reſidence of that Evil, in the Heart, *let none of you imagine evil againſt his Brother in your heart.*

'Tis a Negative Precept, whereby we are here firſt, and by St. *Paul* afterwards, commanded to abſtain from all appearances of Evil; here from evil Thoughts, there from evil Actions; for ſeldom

doth a perverſe Imagination ſet a Brood, but it hatcheth ſome diſmal Exploit.

Thus he that gives himſelf to imagine Evil, will at laſt proceed to give Falſe-witneſs; firſt privately, and then publickly in Judgment; and in Judicial Acts this is diverſly committed:

Firſt, By the falſe and unjuſt Accuſer; and therefore the Law admoniſheth, *Lev.* 19. *Thou ſhalt not ſtand againſt the Blood of thy Neighbour, thou ſhalt not accuſe him wrongfully, and bring his Life in danger.*

Secondly, By the Magiſtrate who pronounceth an indirect Sentence.

Thirdly, By corrupt Advocates that patronize falſe Titles, as *Tertullus* abuſed his Eloquence in diſgracing St. *Paul*, *Acts* 24. any way to be a Falſe Witneſs, is a grievous thing; he commits Sin in the Violation of Juſtice, and by Lying and Perjury; in every falſe Teſtimony a Man Sins againſt God, oppreſſeth the Innocent, and condemneth his own Soul. For Falſe-witneſs, the Puniſhment by the Law of God was Retaliation: *If the witneſs be a Falſe-witneſs, and ſhall teſtifie falſly againſt his Brother; then ſhall you do unto him, as he thought to have done unto his Brother*, Deut. 19. 18, 19.

So *Haman* was juſtly hanged on the ſame Gibbet that he had ſet up for *Mordecai*; and *Daniel*'s Accuſers were caſt into the Lion's Den, whither he was before condemned. Falſe Witneſſes were by the Edict of the ancient *Romans*, thrown down as Malefactors from the *Tarpeian-hill.*

This

This Malady hath its original in the Heart of Man, but the Searcher of Hearts can find all out, there is no diſſembling with him that knows the very Thoughts thereof. Though *Joſhua* could not, yet God can immediately ſee through the moſt curious Umbrages and lying Teſtimonials which the moſt Politick *Gibeonites* can invent, though Falſities were never ſo cunningly couched, he will find them out, though a *French* Tongue conſpired with a *Spaniſh* Arrogance to frame a Greekiſh Lye.

Therefore God will avenge the Hurt that we do to an Innocent Neighbour, if we Blaſpheme him either in Name, or in Perſon, as *Jezebel* procured *Naboth* to be thought a Blaſphemer of God and the King, and thereupon had him Murthered: Of this ſort of Calumny or Backbiting there are four kinds.

Firſt, Men begin with Evil Suſpicions, of which *Eliab* was guilty, when he ſaid to his Brother *David*, *I know thy Pride, and the Naughtineſs of thy Heart,* 1 Sam. 17 *for thou art come down that thou mighteſt ſee the Battel.*

Secondly, They proceed therein, having itching Ears ready and open to receive Detractions; ſuch were *Saul*'s, who leaned to thoſe Promoters that informed againſt *David*, till *David* demonſtrated them to be falſe Men, by his ſparing of *Saul*'s Life in the Cave at *Engaddi*.

The third procedure in this Vice, is by Raſhneſs in Judging; but this our Lord forbids in theſe pregnant words, *Judge not, and you ſhall not be judged.*

And

And this Evil is finiſhed by a continual but an unhappy Inclination or malicious Deſire of Back-biting, the Laws utterly forbids this, *Lev.* 19. 16. *Thou ſhalt not go up and down as a Tail-bearer amongſt thy People*: Theſe being the moſt Peſtilent ſort of Vagabonds, ſhould be whip'd from every Houſe.

He that *Back*-bites his Neighbour, hath Satan in his Mouth; he that hears the Calumny, hath him in his Ear; and he that believes it, hath him in his Heart, having caſt out Charity, which is the *Bond* of Peace.

The Puniſhment that the Witty Comedian alots them is, That all Libellers ſhould hang the Hearers by the Ears, and the Detractors by the Tongues. To credit Falſe Reports and Seditious News, is a ſign of malevolent Manners, or of childiſh Conditions: And therefore the Philoſopher being asked what *Beaſt* did bite the ſoareſt, anſwered, Of wild *Beaſts*, a Detractor; and of tame, a Flatterer.

Therefore hath our Great God forbidden all evil Surmiſes; yet having an Eye to our Frailty, he would ſtint us betimes, leſt we ſhould proceed to wicked Practices; therefore he ſtops the next Iſſue of an evil Heart, ſaying, *Thou ſhalt not bear Falſe-witneſs againſt thy Neighbour*; forewarning us againſt all Untruths and falſe Evidences. We muſt not admit of evil Thoughts, for theſe are the firſt Actors of our *Brothers* Tragedy, for out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Falſe-witneſs, Murthers, *&c.* Here the Scene of bloody

Thoughts

Thoughts is finiſhed, for Murther is either Internal or External; the Internal likewiſe is Twofold, either conceived as in Anger, Hatred, Deſire of Revenge, or elſe permitted by conſenting to another Man's Death, *Who knowing the Judgment of God, (that they who do ſuch things are worthy of death) not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in, or favour them that do them*, Rom. 1. 32.

The External is actually committed by hand, as Wounding, and ſo conſequently Slaying; by the Mouth, as Reviling, and giving Pernicious Counſel; by Help, as adminiſtring Aid, and ſo being acceſſary to the Murther: This External Murther is either wiſhed in Words, attempted in Geſtures, or perpetrated in Deed.

There is an External Act of Murther likewiſe forbidden, that is committed by haſty Rage, Malice, Envy, *&c.*

The Law of God is Spiritual, and therefore it binds not only the Hands and Tongue, but the Heart and Affections alſo: As our bleſſed Saviour, the beſt Interpreter of the Law teacheth; He that is angry with his Brother without a cauſe, in reſpect of his own Will and Purpoſe, hath committed Man-ſlaughter; and therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, *He that hateth his Brother is a Man-ſlayer*, 1 *John* 3. 15.

A good Phyſician doth not only take away the Evil that is apparent, but alſo removes the very Root of the Diſeaſe; therefore our bleſſed Saviour not only forbids to take heed of Murther, but of Anger

Anger alſo; for Homicide and Murther are engendered by Anger and Rage.

You have now heard the Effects which an Evil Heart doth produce, the Inconveniencies that it enſnares the Soul of Man with, let none of us therefore be ſo defrauded and ſeduced, but rather to *Execute true Judgment, and ſhew Mercy and Compaſſion every Man to his Brother; and oppreſs not the Widow, nor the Fatherleſs, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine evil againſt his Brother in your Heart.*

That none of theſe Evils may be countenanced, the Laws of God and of this Realm have conſtituted Judges and Officers to obſerve, and to forbid and puniſh them.

And it did pleaſe Almighty God, to ſet before us the very Model of executing Juſtice, by ſending his great Officers upon the place to make their Inqueſt; (which Method our Wiſe Laws have therefore eſpouſed,) and my Lords the King's Judges purſue it now in their ſeveral Circuits. 'Tis in 1 *Sam.* 7. 15, 16, 17. *And* Samuel *judged* Iſrael *all the days of his Life. And he went from year to year in Circuit to* Bethel, *and* Gilgal, *and* Mizpeh, *and judged* Iſrael *in all thoſe places. And his return was to* Ramah, *for there was his Houſe, and there he judged* Iſrael, *and there he built an Altar unto the Lord.*

Samuel began at *Bethel* where was the Houſe of God, and at the finiſhing of his Circuit at *Ramah*

Ramah he built an Altar and praised God; which is the Foundation of this Honourable and Solemn Audience, before which I having made such suitable Observations (upon the Text) as the time and the publick Affairs will admit of.

I will close up all with a very few words of general Advice, and publick Exhortation, desiring every Person in this great Assembly, seriously to consider, as it becomes them in their Allegiance, That as on the one side the King's Majesty hath ended the late War gloriously, and is raising a solid and defensive Superstructure upon the Foundation of the Peace: So the late unparallell'd Parliament (that Phenix like can only arise again out of its own Ashes of Dissolution) hath gratefully and honourably provided for the King's Support, that he may enjoy the compleat Lustre and Repose of his Successes. And indeed, they that were not Zealous to Support our King, might justly have been suspected to be in Pension with a Forreign King.

Our Dangers disappear and vanish, and our Charges will begin to lessen, which though for many Years they have been great, yet were they our very Security.

Since therefore our publick Charges, as well as our publick Hazards, will decline together, (unless evil and foolish Men, by clamouring unseasonably against them, entail them upon themselves and

us too) Let us unite in Amity and Friendſhip, and forget all Names of Diſtinction, and decline all peeviſh and clandeſtine Projects one againſt another: Then aſſuredly will our Enemies be weakened and infatuated by our Reconciliation, and our own Intereſts be ſtrengthned and eſtabliſhed; So that every diſcreet Obſerver may ſay with Holy *David:*

Behold! How good and joyful a thing it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.

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